

Statement to Parliament: International Freedom of Religion or Belief Day 2017: Mark Field's statement

I am delighted to represent the Government in this debate and, along with everyone else, to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) on securing it on such an important occasion. I pay tribute to him and to all the members of the all-party parliamentary group for international freedom of religion or belief for their continued strong commitment to promoting this universal human right. We welcome the views of parliamentarians and civil society groups on what more we might do, and we seek to act on those views where possible.

I was going to thank the new boy and the new girl who have made speeches today, but unfortunately the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (Jamie Stone) has now left the Chamber. Perhaps he took to heart the idea of catching a plane home—he has a slightly longer commute to his constituency than I do, of course. He and the hon. Member for Belfast South (Emma Little Pengelly) made good and heartfelt speeches, as indeed did all Members who contributed.□

To speak slightly personally, I have spent all but four months of my 16 years in this place as a Back Bencher. Although I believe firmly that I must speak today on behalf of the Government, I am also aware, as the Government need to be aware, that we do not have a full majority in the House of Commons. Therefore, the opinions of Parliament in this and many other matters have increasing importance. I take seriously this sort of debate. In my role as a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, I will endeavour to pass it on to the high commissions and embassies within my bailiwick, in order to ensure that the concerns expressed by parliamentarians do not just die in the ether or appear on a few pages of Hansard for a particular day, but are given practical effect. I give my word to everyone here that I shall endeavour to do so and to boil down the issues debated, as well as the important report, to make a practical—if not life-changing—day-to-day difference in how our embassies and high commissions operate. I will ensure that the concerns addressed by parliamentarians, not just in this debate but in numerous others, are brought to bear.

To an extent, that has already been done in relation to Burma, as the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton (Liz McInnes) pointed out. As my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford rightly said, more than 600,000 Rohingya have been forced to flee to Bangladesh since 25 August. Parliamentarians' active role has contributed to the UK's continuing leading international position on the matter. The issue is evolving, and I know that frustration has been expressed at various times, not least by the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton, and rightly so; it is her role in opposition to provide a practical sense of concern about the pace of reform.

I spoke about the issue yesterday at a Foreign Affairs Committee hearing. The situation continues to evolve, in diplomatic and political terms. As recently as Monday I was at the United Nations in Geneva to pledge on behalf of UK taxpayers an additional £12 million, bringing to £47 million, or \$62 million, the UK's contribution to the heartfelt international efforts in response to this terrible humanitarian catastrophe, which at the moment is occurring predominantly in Bangladesh. The hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton is absolutely right that we are doing all we can to ensure that the displaced can return to Burma, and one hopes that some of the money will be spent to rebuild lives and villages on that side of the border.

That is an example of what is going on; no doubt in three or four months' time there will be other issues for me, as a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, or one of my colleagues, to deal with. That is why we appreciate the work of the all-party parliamentary group and parliamentarians to raise the temperature of such important issues; it informs and complements our work overseas. I stress that I will, in my own small way as a Minister, take it seriously. If we hear such representations, we will try to ensure that we can act on them in our embassies and high commissions elsewhere.

Tomorrow our posts across the diplomatic network will mark International Freedom of Religion or Belief Day in various ways. I want to mark the occasion by reiterating the Government's commitment to promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief, reflecting on the situation in a number of countries of particular concern and setting out what action the Government are taking on the issue.□

Article 18 of the universal declaration of human rights is the fundamental principle underpinning our work. It defines freedom of religion or belief as

“the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”.

As a number of hon. Members have pointed out in this debate, the article states that everyone has the right to choose a religion or belief, or to have no religious belief at all. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister spoke earlier this year about her

“determination to stand up for the freedom of people of all religions to practice their beliefs in peace and safety.”

I set out my own personal commitment on this issue when I last spoke on it in a debate in July, and I know that Lord Ahmad, the FCO Minister with responsibility for human rights, regularly expresses sentiments similar to mine, both in the other place and in his engagements in London and overseas. I also know that he was with many Members yesterday in Speaker's House for the [launch of the APPG's report](#), which is a genuinely impressive piece of work that will further inform our efforts in this area.

We make those efforts not just because the right to freedom of religion or belief is a principle worth defending for its own sake. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Jeremy Lefroy), who said that we also make those efforts because we believe that societies in which people are free

to practise their faith or belief are, by their very nature, more stable, more prosperous and more resilient to extremism.

Sadly, however, the situation in a number of countries around the world continues to cause grave concern, and as I have a little more time than I had anticipated I will give some specific examples. The information provided by the Pew Research Centre shows that Christians have been harassed in more countries than any other religious group. The middle east is the cradle of the religion, although obviously it is also the cradle of other religions, namely Islam and Judaism. However, Christians in the middle east are particularly suffering from harassment. In Iraq the Christian population has fallen from over 1 million in 2003 to a current estimate of 250,000. We are also concerned about the plight of Christians in Syria, Burma and a number of other countries.

However, followers of all faiths and religions suffer persecution, as at times do people of no faith, so I will set out what the UK Government are doing in some specific cases. Essentially, our approach is to tackle the issue on two fronts: first, working with and strongly lobbying countries individually; and secondly, working within organisations such as the United Nations.

A recent example of our bilateral approach is our work to defend the rights of Christians in Sudan, and we welcomed the release of several pastors earlier this year. We have also called for the release of the Eritrean Patriarch, Abune Antonios, and we are supporting the rights of many faith groups, including the Baha'i in Iran and, as has already been said, the Rohingya Muslims in Burma. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman) made the important point that some Rohingya are actually Hindu and that some have no religion at all, but they too have been persecuted during these terrible times. What I am saying also applies to [Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia](#) and Shi'a Muslims in several countries, including Saudi Arabia.□

Lord Ahmad recently visited an Ahmadiyya mosque in Dhaka in Bangladesh for a multi-faith gathering, at which he made a call for universal religious tolerance. Most recently, we have expressed concern about proposed amendments to the law in Nepal, which my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford rightly said would restrict religious freedoms. Only last month I had the opportunity to speak about that issue directly with my US counterpart at the UN General Assembly.

As an example of our multilateral work to defend and protect religious freedoms, I draw the House's attention to the UK's leading role in the global efforts to bring ISIS or Daesh to justice. All of us here are only too aware of the absolutely appalling treatment that that paramilitary group has meted out to anyone who does not subscribe to its extremist ideology. That has included religious minorities in Iraq and Syria—Christians and Yazidis—and of course the majority Muslim populations in those countries.

The UK is determined that Daesh will not get away with it. That is important not only in countering extremism, but in defending the right to freedom of religion or belief. We have led the multilateral response to Daesh. My right

hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, together with his Belgian and Iraqi counterparts, got the ball rolling last year with a UK-led initiative to bring Daesh to justice. Just last month a new UK-drafted UN resolution, co-sponsored by 46 member states, including Iraq, was [adopted unanimously by the Security Council](#), as Daesh Accountability Resolution 2379. The resolution calls on the UN Secretary General to establish an investigative team to collect, preserve and store evidence of crimes by so-called Islamic State, beginning in Iraq. I know that we will be supported by members of the APPG, who focused on the issue when their report was launched yesterday.

That UN investigative team will be led by a special adviser with a mandate to promote the need to bring ISIS to justice around the globe. We have contributed, as a down-payment, £1 million to support the establishment of the team, to ensure that it is adequately resourced at the outset and that the evidence collected is used to bring the perpetrators to book.

However, our work on promoting freedom of religion or belief goes beyond bilateral or multilateral efforts overseas. We are also now committed to stepping up our engagement with faith leaders here in the UK. That is why Lord Ahmad has established a regular roundtable with a variety of faith leaders and representatives, the first of which he hosted as recently as Monday. The aim of the roundtable is to discuss how the Government and faith leaders can work together to address issues of religious freedom. We want faith groups to play a bigger role in seeking solutions to international crises and to broader international challenges. That international network will be of critical importance. Also, when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office marks International Human Rights Day in December, we will focus particularly on promoting freedom of religion or belief, and on the important role that faith leaders can play in driving that agenda.

We shall continue to support religious freedom and tolerance through our project work under the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Magna Carta fund for human rights and democracy. I must confess that I am particularly proud of a project that is helping secondary school teachers in the middle east and north Africa to create lesson plans that promote tolerance and freedom of religion or belief among all their pupils. The project is being implemented by an organisation called Hardwired Inc, which, along with other civil society organisations, is a vital partner in our efforts to make article 18 a reality. I pay tribute to its dedicated work.

We continue to strive to be as effective as possible in promoting freedom of religion or belief. Ensuring that our embassy and high commission staff are properly trained is an essential part of that programme, and I know that the APPG's report rightly highlighted such training. I will continue to look for ways to improve religious literacy among our staff. We already provide a set of resources to support their work, which we will promote more widely to our posts overseas. Earlier this month the FCO launched a new religion and diplomacy course. We will continue to review actively both that course and the feedback it receives from our staff, to ensure that it meets our needs in a fast-changing world.

In addition, my noble Friend Lord Ahmad will write to all our ambassadors and

high commissioners tomorrow, reissuing our freedom of religion or belief toolkit and instructing them to give serious consideration to freedom of religious belief in their diplomatic engagement with host Governments. Where there are violations of religious belief, Members can be assured that the FCO and its Ministers are clear that they will be addressed through our diplomacy with international partners.

In partnership with Lord Ahmad, I will also write to the embassies and high commissions in key countries for which I have responsibility, asking them to report on precisely what they are doing to promote freedom of religion or belief. I will ensure that our embassies are aware of the strength of both parliamentary feeling and my own personal feelings on this issue.

As recently as 2011 there were 150,000 Christians in the city of Aleppo in Syria, which is a country I visited in my first term as a Member of Parliament. Now, as far as we can understand, there are fewer than 35,000. Religious persecution has increased in other Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Sudan and Iran. In Nigeria, 1.8 million people have been displaced by Boko Haram. In India, it has been suggested that the harassment of Christians has increased with the current rise of Hindu nationalism. However, I also take on board what my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow East said on that issue, namely that Hindus and Sikhs themselves are under day-to-day threat in parts of the subcontinent. In China there are now no fewer than 127 million Christians, which I fear has upset the authorities there, who see Christianity as some form of foreign infiltration and seek to Sinicise it in some way.

I will now take the opportunity to address one or two issues that were specifically raised by a number of Members. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford that there are concerns that some provisions of the new penal code in Nepal may be constructed to limit the freedom to adapt, change or practise a religion. I have already raised those concerns with the Government of Nepal and will continue to do so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster) mentioned Egypt, which is a human rights priority country. Her Majesty's Government have been clear that freedom of religion or belief needs to be actively protected. The Government of Egypt have stated their commitment to protecting the rights of minorities and the need for religious tolerance. We regularly raise concerns with the Egyptian Government about the deteriorating human rights situation, including issues that affect Christians. The Coptic Christian community is made up of 8 million to 9 million people and has been around as long as any other Christian group, but there are great fears for its future, and certainly for its future stability.

May I take this opportunity to apologise to the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk (Martyn Day), who has not yet received a response to his letter on behalf of his constituent from 25 August? I will endeavour to find out where the letter has gone in the system. He made some interesting comments about the apostasy issue. I will contact the Home Office to request that it finds a way to include such cases within the hate crime statistics, if that is at all possible. I will get back to him when I have a reply.

There was a slightly discordant shot from the hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) on genocide. Genocide is strictly a legal term. Whether a parliamentary motion or Ministers refer to it as genocide is neither here nor there; it is strictly a legal term. With what has been happening in Burma and various other parts of the world, it is clear that a process has to be gone through in the UN and finally in the International Criminal Court before a genocide can be proven.

I want to reassure those Members who raised the issue of funding. All DFID's support to Governments involves discussions on human rights, and we will continue to give serious consideration to adopting recommendations 1 and 2 from the report to take account of DFID and FCO funding streams. I do not want to commit my Department on the Floor of the House without it having had a proper look through all the recommendations. To be brutally honest, many of them relate to issues that we already address on a day-to-day basis, but we will give the report serious consideration. Once we have had a chance to look through all the recommendations, I will get back to the shadow Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford to say which ones we are in a position fully to adopt and what action we would look to take elsewhere.

In conclusion, the Government believe strongly that whole societies benefit when the fundamental rights of all their citizens are respected and protected. That includes the right to religious freedom or belief, or to have no religion at all. That is why we will continue to work with individual countries, with the international community and with faith leaders and civil society organisations to promote and defend this fundamental right. The UK Government's position is to remain absolutely committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief as enshrined in article 18 of the international covenant on civil and political rights, supported by article 2 on non-discrimination and article 26 on access to justice. I think I speak for everyone who has contributed to this important debate when I say this: only when these universal rights are universally respected can there be religious freedom for everyone, everywhere.

News story: Funding available in England towards replacing fishing vessel engines

The MMO has made a number of changes to the EMFF scheme to make sure it continues to provide maximum possible benefit to the fishing sector and associated communities. This includes gathering feedback from the fishing industry and representative bodies as to where financial assistance would be of most use.

A significant development is that funding is now available towards the replacement of engines on fishing vessels. Other changes include to some funding thresholds. Full details are available on the [MMO website](#).

Michelle Willis, MMO Chief Finance Officer, said:

“We are committed to ensuring that the EMFF scheme meets the needs of the people it is designed to serve and we regularly use stakeholder feedback to refine and improve the scheme. These changes are further evidence of that commitment.

“The changes we have made will allow fishermen to apply for funding to upgrade their engines, which will improve reliability, reduce running costs, provide safety benefits and also reduce the impact on the environment. The amendments to increase funding thresholds in a number of areas should also help strengthen the fisheries sector and be of significant benefit to the industry as a whole.

“I would urge people to visit the MMO website to learn about the changes, see if they can now benefit from EMFF funding and submit an application or expression of interest to us.”

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Speech: Sustainable growth at heart of future strategy for UK aviation

Good morning everyone.

It's a real pleasure to join you again for your annual conference.

And to kick off what promises to be a very interesting day and a half of debate.

The theme today (30 October 2017) – how we plan for sustainable growth – is a familiar one in transport.

'Sustainable' has become one of those words that means different things to different people.

Often it's used to describe the environmental viability of transport.

Whether we can meet rising demand for mobility while reducing pollution, carbon and noise.

Others use it in an economic sense.

For them, a sustainable business is one that is profitable and growing.

But the true meaning of the word is less specific.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'sustainable' merely as something that can be maintained at a certain rate.

Or kept going at a constant level.

Which strikes me as an unsuitable description for the challenges facing aviation.

What we've done for far too long in this country is 'sustain' transport.

Or done just enough to keep things running.

Decade after decade.

While failing to consider the long-term implications of inaction.

What we are doing today is embracing a different model of sustainability.

Rolling out a huge infrastructure programme.

Making the investments.

Taking the difficult decisions.

To build capacity and resilience for the future.

So when I talk about a sustainable aviation strategy for the UK, I mean one that will help this industry compete and grow in an environmentally friendly way.

I remember last year's AOA Conference well.

It was the [first speech I'd given to an aviation audience as Transport Secretary](#).

I talked about the unprecedented growth that UK airports had experienced in 2015.

The highest passenger numbers since records began.

Airports around the country expanding.

Adding new routes to emerging markets around the world.

Investing in new passenger and freight facilities.

From Edinburgh to Bristol, Manchester to London City Airport – which is also celebrating its 30th birthday this year.

Well – in 2016, you raised the bar again.

268 million terminal passengers.

7% up on the previous year.

A new record for the industry.

And that meant – over a 5 year period – aircraft movements increased by 10%.

Even though aircraft are getting bigger.

And average loads are rising too.

This industry is incredibly successful.

And when you consider that you and your employees have absorbed this growth at a time of heightened security.

Which has put considerable extra responsibility on your shoulders.

I think you've done an outstanding job.

And it's not just your customers who benefit.

We all do.

In fact, never has aviation had more of a positive impact on our economy than it does today.

You've been instrumental in the UK's economic recovery since 2010.

And that vital contribution continues.

Creating thousands of new jobs – at a time when more Britons are in work than ever before.

Attracting new foreign businesses to this country – at a time of record UK inward investment.

And helping us forge new trade links with fast growing cities – when we already have the third largest network of air routes in the world.

When you thrive, Britain thrives.

And that's why, when I think about a sustainable aviation strategy, it's with a clear objective to meet rising passenger and freight demand.

To achieve and increase profitability.

To support your growth ambitions for the future.

While meeting our environmental commitments, and reducing the impact of flights on local communities.

A key theme for the next day and a half.

That's why – just before my speech here last year – we announced that [Heathrow Northwest Runway would be the government's preferred scheme for delivering new airport capacity in the south-east.](#)

Not just with Heathrow, but across the whole sector, we have made good progress since.

We have published a [draft Airports National Policy Statement](#), and received over 70,000 responses to the consultation exercise.

In parallel, Heathrow has been working with airlines to bring the cost of the scheme down – in line with the ambition I set out to keep landing charges as close as possible to current levels.

This is vital to its success of the scheme.

We are now [consulting on a revised draft Airports NPS](#) for a further period of 8 weeks.

Don't think this will derail progress – we are on track.

The draft has been revised in light of the consultation responses we've considered so far.

For example, it reflects changes to government policy, and fresh evidence – from the [air quality plan](#) and new passenger demand forecasts.

Of course it's perfectly normal for National Policy Statements to require more than one round of consultation.

Do not think this delays our plans.

Indeed the Planning Act 2008 requires the government to consult on material changes.

So that is what we are doing.

And we remain on track to lay a final airports NPS in Parliament during the first half of next year.

The updated passenger demand forecasts published last week show that the need for extra capacity in the south-east is even greater than previously thought.

They show that all 5 of London's main airports will be completely full by the mid-2030s.

The updated analysis also shows that the north-west runway scheme at Heathrow would deliver the greatest benefits soonest.

And that it continues to offer the greatest choice of destinations and frequency of vital long-haul routes.

The runway would deliver benefits of up to £74 billion to passengers and the wider economy over 60 years.

Of the 3 options shortlisted by the Airports Commission and assessed by the government, the north-west runway offers the greatest economic benefits for at least the next 50 years.

So let's be clear.

The case for expanding Heathrow is as strong as ever.

And the draft NPS makes clear that expansion would not be allowed to proceed without a world-class package of compensation and mitigation measures.

We will then go to Parliament for confirmation.

The airport will set out how it is being a good citizen both locally and for the country.

This includes setting legally binding noise targets, periods of predictable respite, and a ban of 6 and a half hours on scheduled night flights.

Now everyone has until 19 December (2017) to consider and respond to new evidence.

Once MPs approve a final document, it will set the policy framework for the developer to bring forward a planning application for a new north-west runway.

I describe this stage as outline planning permission – the detailed work begins afterwards.

Of course the views of airports around the country are crucial.

Because a third runway at Heathrow will provide opportunities for new and more frequent domestic connections to our largest hub.

And so help passengers to benefit from onward connections to long haul destinations.

But – although it dominates the headlines – Heathrow is just one airport.

And London is just one city.

We're lucky having a network of over 40 commercial airports across the country.

Directly serving over 150 short-haul and 35 long-haul destinations.

These connections provide huge benefits for cities and our regions.

So we welcome airports and airlines working together to develop new direct routes.

Creating a competitive market that gives the customer more choice, more frequent flights, and lower fares.

That's why our new [aviation strategy](#) will reflect the need for growth across the UK.

For example, Manchester which has fantastic plans.

Aberdeen and Bristol too. They are combining investment with visionary management.

Successive governments have published many strategic aviation documents over the years.

Some more influential than others.

Well our new strategy will set a course for the future that will affect every airport in the country.

This will be more than just a statement of intent.

It will be a long-term vision for the sector to 2050 and beyond.

In particular, how we can make best use of existing capacity.

And where we might need new capacity in the future.

As well as meeting all our environmental obligations.

It's an opportunity to look at what the government can do for you and your customers.

Putting the passenger at the heart of what we do.

But also providing the connections Britain will need in the future.

Brexit is important to the transport sector.

Negotiations and detailed work are underway already to secure a fair and liberal deal.

No other transport sector will have such a key role to play as aviation when we leave the European Union.

A clear priority for me through the negotiations is to achieve the best possible access to European markets for aviation.

We've not started those discussions yet, but we are well prepared for when they do.

I remain confident that we'll get a good deal, and that UK airlines and airports will continue to flourish.

Because our aviation market is the biggest in Europe.

And it's in the interests of all European countries, and everyone who travels between them, that we seek an open, liberal arrangement following Brexit.

But just as crucial is how we capitalise on our new position in the world.

At the moment, services to some third countries, like the US and Canada, are determined by EU-negotiated arrangements.

I am pleased to say that we are making rapid progress towards securing post-Brexit arrangements with those countries.

We already enjoy excellent international connectivity, but we should constantly ask ourselves how UK airports can open up more long haul routes to markets like China, South America and India than we do today.

Routes that have an enormous impact on inward investment.

So we will continue to work with you to ensure the aviation strategy

represents the interests of every airport, in every region of the country.

Another priority is the modernisation of the industry.

In particular, the way that UK airspace is managed.

To tackle delays, cut emissions and reduce the need for stacking above our busiest airports.

Our aircraft are fitted with the latest satellite navigation technology, but most of our airspace arrangements are 50 years out of date.

Without action, by 2030 total delays due to inefficient use of airspace capacity could be 70 times more than in 2015.

This wouldn't just be bad news for passengers.

It would also damage the economy and the environment, as planes are increasingly forced to circle above urban areas while waiting for a landing slot.

As you know, earlier this year we held a consultation on how we can make better use of this critical piece of national infrastructure.

Our response to that consultation confirms that we will establish a new independent commission on civil aviation noise.

This will ensure the noise impacts of airspace changes are properly considered.

Giving local communities more of a say in airspace changes.

They will help us make the most of quieter and more efficient aircraft and to provide more predictable periods of relief from noise.

We need to make the most of technology.

We are also making compensation for airspace changes fairer by bringing it into line with existing compensation policy for new airport development.

I've been pleased with the way the industry has engaged with the consultation process.

And the way in which aviation is working with communities and stakeholders.

To minimise the environmental impact of flights.

It's by being responsible and transparent that aviation will earn the right to grow.

So we can build a truly sustainable strategy for the future.

Sadly, Monarch will not be part of that future.

But I just wanted to thank everyone who helped us repatriate passengers following Monarch's recent failure.

It was a remarkable effort.

With government working alongside airlines and airports to deal with a complex and difficult logistical challenge.

A huge amount of work at short notice.

In fact the Prime Minister has personally thanked the industry for the way it responded.

And I absolutely endorse her thanks today.

Monarch reminds us that the market remains incredibly competitive.

I know it's challenging out there for airports and airlines.

And I recognise that until the Brexit negotiations are finished, there is inevitable uncertainty about what will happen.

I want you to be confident of the process and the future Brexit will provide.

But I can assure you that the interests of our aviation industry are at the forefront of our minds.

Not just because Britain needs the services and connections you provide.

But because we need the jobs and prosperity you bring to every part of this country. That's why we're expanding Heathrow.

It's why we're working on a new aviation strategy.

And it's why we believe the only sustainable model for UK airports is one that helps you flourish.

So let's continue to work together in partnership.

Let's grasp hold of the growth opportunities out there.

And let's look forward to the future with confidence.

Thank you.

[Press release: £3m improvements for](#)

the A64 in York

Resurfacing, drainage, bridge maintenance and upgrading of traffic signals are just some of the work being carried out between Bramham and Grimston Bar.

The work is part of Highways England's £80m maintenance improvements on Yorkshire's roads this year providing drivers with smoother and safer journeys. Over the year over 207 miles of lanes will be resurfaced, using over 100,000 tonnes of material. That's the same as resurfacing one lane of the M1 between York and London and 1.5 times the weight of the new HMS Queen Elizabeth, the largest aircraft carrier ever built for the Royal Navy.

Highways England project manager Chris Dunn said:

We are carrying out a series of improvements along the A64 between Bramham and Grimston Bar over the next few months which will provide better journeys for drivers and improve road safety.

It also includes improvements to the footpaths and kerbing, and other associated work such as cabling and renewing the white lines will be carried out as part of the 2 schemes.

Work will start tonight (Monday 30 October) at Grimston Bar for just under 2 months as part of a £0.7m scheme to resurface the roundabout and footpaths and upgrading the traffic signals.

The following week (Monday 6 November) sections of the A64 will be reconstructed and resurfaced between Bramham and Askham Bryan as part of a £2.5m scheme. The roundabout at Bramham will also be resurfaced and drainage work carried out between Bilbrough and Askham Bryan. This scheme will be carried out in phases and is expected to be completed by the end of January.

Work will be carried out overnight, when traffic flows are lowest, between 8pm and 6am on weekdays, between 8pm on Friday and 9am on Saturday and 8pm on Saturday until 10am on Sunday.

Clearly signed diversions will be in place.

Work is also due to start in November on improving road safety at the Barton Hill crossroads.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448

and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.